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Beyond the
Gates of
Care ***

HERBERT BASHFORD

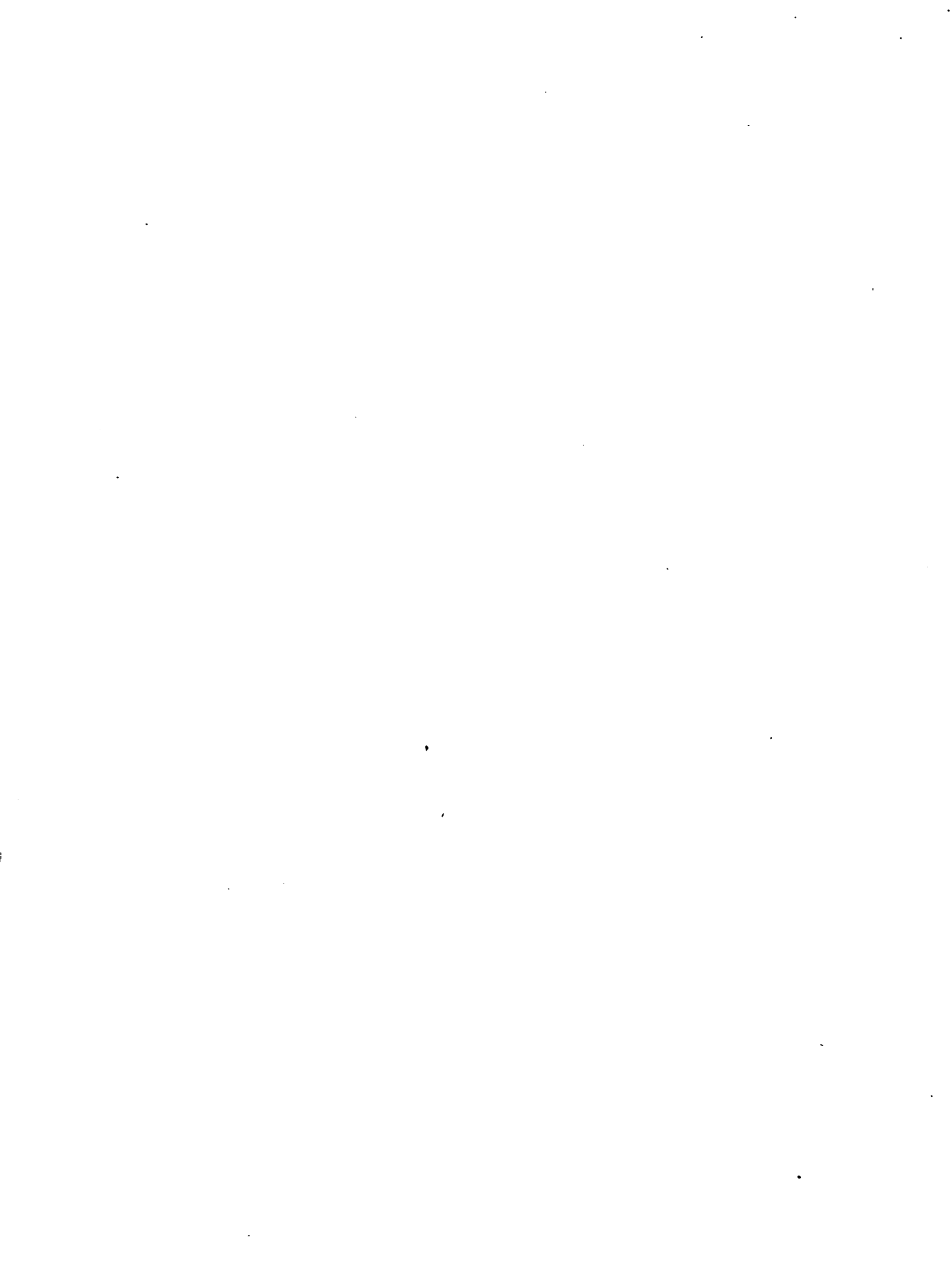
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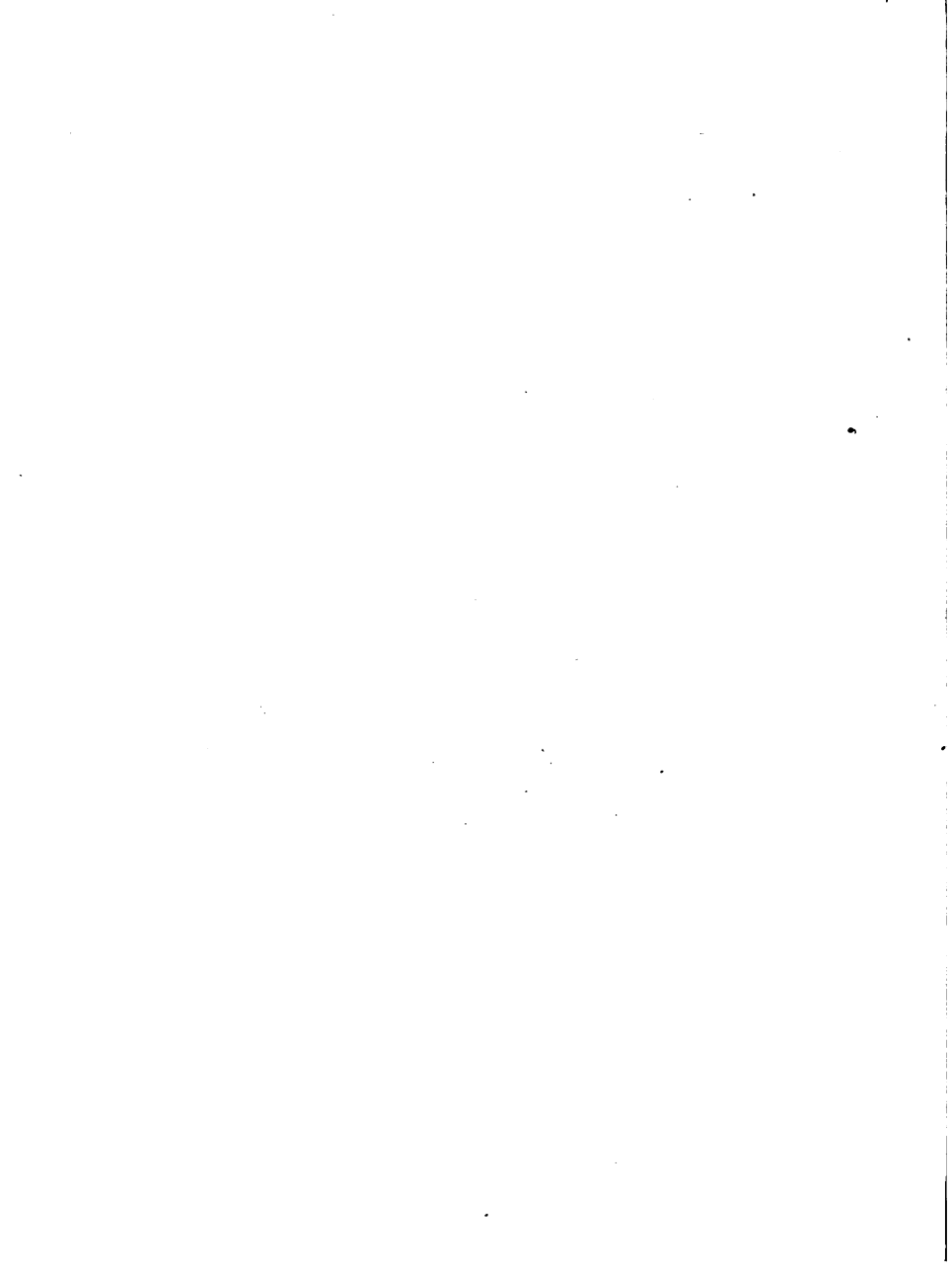
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Beyond the Gates of Care

BY

HERBERT BASHFORD

Author of "SONGS FROM PUGET SEA," "NATURE STORIES OF THE
NORTHWEST," "THE WOLVES OF THE SEA," etc.



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HERBERT BASHFORD.

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H. B.

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Sunrise.



The sun climbs up with burning feet,
The sea is now a tossing sheet
Fire-fringed where shore and waters meet.

Upon the crest of yonder height
Each tall, dead cedar, slim and white,
Is but a lifted lance of light.

The Sea of the North



Along the lone shore of the northland the wild waves
incessantly thunder;

White-helmeted warriors are they that wrestle and
roar on the reef;

So full of deep woe is the voice of these turbulent
waters, I wonder

If this mourning sea of the North is not the gray
mother of Grief.

The bold, frowning headlands loom dim through the
spray of the seas that are dashing

High over the foam-covered ledges and brown, rug-
ged rocks of the coast;

I see the plumed legions ride landward and list to their
terrible crashing,

Their furious tumult and clamor—the wail of a down-
trodden host!

At the base of the beetling cliff the caverns are moan-
ing and sobbing,

And the great flakes of froth from the waves are as
white as the gay gull that flees

Where the far-reaching billows are wildest; and, ah,
how my pulses are throbbing

As I view the strong sweep of the surf and the mar-
velous shatter of seas!

But the surges that fawn at my feet have a sound like a
serpent's fierce hisses,
And though the pale lips of the breakers are pressed
to the stone as they climb
Toward the crest of the crag, yet I know, in spite of
your passionate kisses,
Your heart ever hungers for horror, oh, hoar-locked
companion of Time!

The Arid Lands.



These lands are clothed in burning weather,
These parched lands pant for God's cool rain;
I look away where strike together
The burnished sky and barren plain.

I look away; no green thing gladdens
My weary eye—no flower, no tree,
Naught save the earth, the sage-brush saddens
The scorched, gray earth that sickens me.

Oh, for the pines, where the sweet wind revels!
The ringing laugh of the crystal creek!
Alas, gaunt Hunger haunts these levels,
And Thirst goes wandering wan and weak.

No shadow falls where swiftly passes
The gray coyote's noiseless feet,
No song of bird, no hint of grasses—
The home of Silence and of Heat!

On the Cliff.



Pushes the bold, strong tide high over the sheer, rough
ledges,

Stand the brave seas on the rocks all red with the
sun's parting glow,

Cold, fine spray in the air fast dimming the crag's sharp
edges,

Lifting like smoke from the boom of the great wave-
cannon below.

Rises the calm, fair moon, white ruler of turbulent
ocean,

Bends her fair form in response to that far-sounding
thunder of praise,

Steps, silver-sandaled, where seas writhe in wildest
commotion,

Smiles at the foam-shrouded waters that follow her
down through the days.

Safe are we here on the cliff; but ah! that mad shatter
and crashing

Brings the chill tremor of fear, the short, hard, shud-
dering breath,

Look, oh, God, look beneath us! How fearful the
tumult, the lashing—

Lashing of crazed, hungry billows that clamor for
terror and death.

An Old Garden.



The old, gray fence is wrapped in vines
While here and there a creeper trails
A burning lash that twists and twines
Around the ancient, rotting rails.

A slender streamlet shivers through
The tall, strong grass and glides along
To seaward with such silence you
Hear but the echo of a song.

A few broad sunflowers flaming bright
Lift from the brambles' woven darks;
Amid sweet clover, pink and white,
A poppy flings its glowing sparks.

Beyond lean lonely alder trees,
Each slim trunk mottled leopard-wise;
In deep flower bells crawl bandit bees
With belts of gold about their thighs.

Midwinter in the Northwest.



Through all the dreary days the cold rains pour,
And winter's chilling gusts make sullen moan;
Their outstretched arms the tall pines raise and lower
As if to silence that deep monotone.

No song of bird now thrills the solemn wood,
And save the wailing wind there is no sound;
Where once the lilies in white beauty stood
The rotting leaves have robed the sodden ground.

The slender cedars standing on the height
Seem bony fingers pointing to the sky;
The maple trees, ah, what a woeful sight—
Mere skeletons that ever strive to die!

I look in vain for glowing sun at morn,
At evening watch the dark blot out the day
And greet, mayhap, the old moon, pale and worn,—
A groping ghost half seen through folds of gray.

The Cougar.



He lies in wait where woods are dim
Low-crouched upon a mossy limb,
While each leaf shakes at sight of him.

The graceful fawn and timid doe
Tread down the clover blooms below;
Two yellow flames his great eyes grow.

Ah, meek, gray doe and spotted fawn
You little know as you stroll on
That he lurks near with daggers drawn!

And, oh, how sudden is the spring,
How keen the claws that earthward bring
The brown-eyed mother shuddering!

A crimson pool upon the ground,
A low death wail; the mournful sound
Of weeping from the firs around.

A gory feast, with fangs that tear;
A cluster of tall ferns, from where
A lone fawn looks in mute despair.

• After the Snowstorm.



Each tall pine stands in white array,
A keen north wind goes whistling by,
The clouds take wing and sail away
Like huge gray birds across the sky,
While through the meadow, bleak and cold,
A stream's black windings I can trace,
And o'er yon mountain, jagged, bold,
The full moon shows a frosty face.

· Autumn Days.



On autumn days in woodland ways
I lie beneath the trees
And watch the clouds in snowy shrouds
Drift through the upper seas.
The leaves of brown come floating down,
The boughs are blown apart;
Above my head are blots of red
From Summer's broken heart.

Around about the streamlets shout,
A chipmunk whisks his tail
And up the pines makes striped lines
Or darts along a rail,
While soft and clear I sometimes hear
A wild bee's dreamy hum,
The liquid notes from trembling throats
And yellowhammer's drum.

The maple old is crowned with gold;
A torch burns just behind;
Like finger tips upon my lips
The touch of balmy wind
That wanders free o'er gem-set sea
And sweetest perfume brings;
I catch below a flash of snow—
A seagull's gleaming wings.

From out the deep the salmon leap
All clad in silver mail,
And far away across the bay
I see a coming sail.
And, oh! how bright that wing of white
Which wafts my love to me;
Ah, dearest one, through miles of sun
I throw a kiss to thee!

A Western Sunset.



We stood upon the clovered hill
And watched the splendid sun go down
Behind the old, deserted mill
And scattered cabins, small and brown.

Some trees with branches interlaced
Were clustered near a shadowed pond;
Each slender twig was clearly traced
Against the gorgeous glow beyond.

A purple streamer in the west
Was stretched above a bank of snow,
While saffron clouds had sunk to rest
In spreading orange fields below.

Two fleecy shapes did twist and twine
Until they formed a giant cup,
Which plunged into a sea of wine
And, bubbling o'er, was lifted up.

She pointed to a scarlet bar—
My sweet companion, young and fair,
And wondered if the evening star
Were frightened as it trembled there.

We lingered long; a cooling breeze
Came laden with the breath of musk;
We heard low pipings in the trees,
And clear notes dropping through the dusk.

The Poet.



The poet sang his joyous songs;
Men heard them not; no word of praise
Ere reached the singer's ear; no hand
Ere smoothed the rugged ways.

Too soon his young soul sought the stars;
From out Time's palm the ages rolled,
And, lo, for each rose on his grave
Men yield their treasured gold!

Dead Man's Island: Puget Sound.



A dot of land, a rugged shore,
A flock of birds, a crooked tree,
Huge piles of rock where often roar
The deep-voiced breakers of the sea.

A ledge of sandstone gray and rough,
A winding trail, some weeds, and then
Two mounds of earth upon a bluff—
Neglected graves of shipwrecked men.

A stormy night, a vessel lost,
White-crested waves that roll and reach,
Two helpless creatures wildly tossed,
Two sailors dying on the beach.

And ever since a curse, a prayer,
Unearthly moans and fiendish cries,
Two figures groping here and there,
Two faces pale with hollow eyes.

• **Mid-summer.**



From crowded street and ceaseless din
To summer's leafy woods we turn,
And hear the brown thrush trill within
The twilight deeps of tousled fern.

Between dark shores of pine and fir
The merry river leaps along—
A clear-voiced poet—wanderer
From out the mystic realm of Song.

The air hangs thick with rich perfumes,
Warm woodland odors, scents of musk;
Tall lilies drowse in bramble glooms
And glimmer through a dream of dusk.

Where one frail branch slow sways and swings
From shade to sunshine can be seen
A scolding jay's bright, burnished wings—
Two sapphire flames amid the green.

We catch a glimpse from where we lie
Of nesting bird above, and higher
Of lilting, yellow butterfly
That flickers like a dying fire.

Oh, summer hours how swift thy flight!
Oh, love how dear those words of thine!
Two fond eyes beam with misty light;
Two rose-red lips are pressed to mine.

·To a Bee.



Belted thief with amber wing
Rifing, while you softly sing,
Every rose within the glade;
Robbing, while you serenade
Each warm-hearted, modest flower,
Blushing through the summer hour;
Blushing at your kisses bold,
Bandit, in your suit of gold;
Flattered that you seem so true,
That a knight has come to woo—
Ah, a gay deceiver, you!

Storm in the Forest.



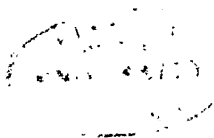
A low, deep roar like that of far-off seas
When up sheer cliffs they strive to clamber higher,
Dark clouds fast driven over gloom-hung trees
And maddened by the lightning's lash of fire.

A rush of wind, loud breathing of the pines,
A shrieking bird in wild, bewildered flight,
Big drops of rain that fall in slanting lines—
Long lances gleaming from a wall of night.

A thousand twigs torn from the maple's hold,
The fir down-beaten, woeful cries of grief,
Wide-spreading maples robbed of all their gold
With wrenched limbs reaching for the last red leaf.

The thunder's jar amid unearthly moans,
A quick, sharp crash above the raging blast,
Shrill pipings mingled with appalling groans
And black, uncertain shapes blown swiftly past.

A swollen streamlet tearing madly by,
The broken boughs in dire confusion hurled,
A riven forest and a clearing sky,
The round sun flaming on a flooded world!



The Seagull.



A ceaseless rover, waif of many climes,
He scorns the tempest, greets the lifting sun
With wings that fling the light and sinks at times
To ride in triumph where the tall waves run.

The rocks tide-worn, the high cliff brown and bare
And crags of bleak, strange shores he rests upon;
He floats above, a moment hangs in air
Clean-etched against the broad, gold breast of dawn.

When wild, strong billows reach in fiercest might
To clutch the gems that fire the midnight sky,
When anger turns the ocean's face to white,
Then sounds afar his shrill, exultant cry.

Bold haunter of the deep! Of thy swift flights
What of them all brings keenest joy to thee,
To drive sharp pinions through storm-beaten nights
Or shriek amid black hollows of the sea?

Summer Hours.



Sweet, summer hours on mild Pacific's shore,
Long, golden hours beside the western sea,
Ah, would that I again might live them o'er;
Those days of ecstasy!

I hear once more the gull's triumphant screech,
And see our white tents glimmer in the sun,
And far beyond the gleaming curve of beach
Where foam-flecked breakers run.

I feel the pressure of her tender hand,
I drink the beauty of her hazel eyes
As we together tread the hard, brown sand
Beneath deep, sapphire skies.

To her the crowding billows rise and bow
And passion-fraught their pulses wildly beat,
Like frenzied lovers they advance and now
Fall prostrate at her feet.

The creeping tide comes in across the reef,
To landward drifts the fine, uprising spray,
The cliff's one pine tree, moaning as with grief,
Is wrapped in shrouds of gray.

We breathe the fragrance of the evening air,
And watch the red sun sinking to his rest
The while the startled waters flame and flare
Against the glowing west.

We sit within the blazing driftwood's glow
And listen to gray ocean's mournful tone,
We gaze enchanted as the surges throw
White fire on crag and stone.

Ne'er will my memory lose those haunting seas,
That wave-born music crashing through the night,
The long-lashed stars, Pacific's balmy breeze,
Nor breaker's wall of light!

• Evening on the Ranch.



The sunshine gilds the moss-robed roofs
And glares upon the window panes;
By twos and threes the lazy herd
Strolls down the winding, dusty lanes.

The flushed sun sinks; the gold-blurred west
Shows dimly through the maple boughs;
The stars flame out; within their stalls
The wearied oxen dream and drowse.

Like some huge ship with hull afire
The crescent moon in vast, wild seas
Of somber pine slow settles down
And burns the black tops of the trees.

A sudden silence, deep, profound,
Steals through the wan, uncertain light,
And now one lone frog's flageolet
Rings clear across the falling night.

In May.



The lavish sun sifts all his gold
Upon the hills to-day;
The snowy lilies star the dusk
In every woodland way;
The pilgrim breakers on the shore
Are kneeling now to pray.

The robin's flute rings sweet and strong
From out the maple tree;
The gray grouse seeks the cedar's shade
And beats his drum for me;
The joyous meadow-lark flings down
A haunting melody.

The dog-wood blooms are round and white
Each like a glowing moon;
The west wind strikes the great pine-harps
And finds them all in tune;
A bluebird flashes by whose wings
Have brushed the skies of June.

-The Song of the Lark.



The towering fir is bathed in dew,
And countless gems are clinging there;
A joyous lark amid the blue
Sends rippling music down the air,
And when on boughs that droop apart
Each bead of crystal pulses bright
His song has touched the dewdrop's heart
And made it quiver with delight.

November.



The chill wind blows across the hills,
Dead leaves are whirling down,
The earth now wears a rustling robe
Of crimson and of brown.

Broad maples wave their naked arms
Like phantoms to and fro,
The sky looks gray—I almost see
December's coming snow.

The Deserted Cabin.



Tall thistles grow about the door,
And up and down the mouldy wall,
Through rotten wood, black spiders crawl;
Across its roof the chipmunks run,
The chinks let in the dying sun
Who lays his red swords on the floor;
But hark! A dismal autumn blast
Sweeps up the gulch and 'round about
The cabin,—now a sudden moan
Within the chimney's mouth of stone,
While on the hearth the blackened brands
Are touched, are moved by unseen hands.

The Blue Heron.



Of homely form and solemn mien,
With dagger beak and legs so slim
One thinks of him as visions seen
In olden dreams, now vague and dim.

With lifted head and searching eye,
In uniform of blue and gray,
He watches from the tree top high—
The sentinel of cove and bay.

And oft as twilight blurs the sea
I mark his flight along the shore,
A strange shape winging cautiously,
A fleeting shadow—nothing more.

Where Solitude Abides.



Alone it stands beside the western sea;
The hands of Time have laid a robe of green
Upon its roof; in each deserted room
The gathered mould of many years is seen,
And spiders, black and hairy, weave and weave
Round, wondrous webs like magic nets of light;
Within the walls and o'er the sounding floors
The shy mice scurry in the silent night,
And dart across those wan and wavering lines
The moon pours through the window's wreath of
vines.

Deserted is the place; the orchard trees
Neglected; close against the creaking door
Dry weeds are clustered, and the passing gust
Snow flakes of drifting thistle-down; no more
Bright roses bloom along the garden path
Nor lift their burning petals to the sun;
The straggling, scarlet briars have overgrown
The narrow way; the dingy gate no one
Now enters; in deep grass the slim stream hides
And speaks no word where Solitude abides.

· December.



Heaps of leaves on the wet earth lying,
Dead ferns robing the rocky hill,
Fallow field and tall fir sighing,
Barren boughs that are never still.

Flocks of crows in the woodland cawing,
Wind-wound grass where the creek goes by,
Over the waters the wild ducks drawing
Long black lines on the leaden sky.

Pale seas sobbing on ragged reaches,—
Sorrowful mourners bowed in prayer—
Wide-winged gulls with sharp, shrill screeches
Piercing like poniards the misty air.

Bleak, chill night and drear rain falling,
Cheerless morn all clad in gray,
Only the weary south wind calling,
Only the loon on the lonely bay.

Copalis.



High above the strong Pacific rising solemnly and
lone
Looms the rugged rock, Copalis, like a mountain
built of stone.
Break the heavy waves against it, roaring through
its caverns wide,
Caverns worn by maddened waters and the moon-
enchanted tide.
All around are curling breakers, sifting spray and
flying foam,
Where the slim sea otter gambols and the gray gull
has a home.
All around is fierce commotion, pale forms reach-
ing toward the skies,
Sounds of awful cannonading, haunting moans and
battle cries.
Clinging to its craggy summit, fastened down with
massive chains,
Bathed in Summer's yellow sunshine, drenched in
Winter's driving rains,

Rests a low, quaint hut, the dwelling of the brave
Copalis Jim,
Rests the hut whose door is opened—opened never
save by him.
From this airy habitation keen black eyes peer on
the seas,
Raven locks are tossed and tangled in the sighing
ocean breeze.
Night and morn he scans the billows marching
grandly far below,
Night and morn he sees them lifting bristling peaks
all white with snow.
Day by day he keeps his vigil caring naught for
any man,
Watching ever with the patience that the otter-
hunter can.
Oft his swarthy face grows eager, oft his rifle darts
its flame
And a dying creature struggles from that quick,
unerring aim.
Oft when midnight winds are calling in his mind
sad thoughts arise,
Thoughts of her who held him captive by the
magic of her eyes.

In his dreams she stands before him as she stood
in days ago
Ere his heart had grown more hardened than the
rock he dwells upon,
And he hears her laughter ringing like the echoes
of a lute
Through the forest still and sombre, down the vales
of Quillayute,
And again he sits beside her speaking tender
words of love
With the fragrant flowers surrounding and the
waving green above.
But the thunder of the breakers and the sea bird's
piercing scream
From the ledges, brown and jagged, break the
vision of his dream.
Ah! Nawanda, false Nawanda, with your artless
maiden grace,
Think you never of your lover living in this lonely
place?—
He whose fondest hope was shattered, now a her-
mit, mute, alone,
Far away on bleak Copalis, on a mountain built
of stone.

In January.



To-day a pall obscures the sky,
And loudly beats the chilling rain,
The seas grow tall, the foam flies high,
The crags along the shore complain.

A wild gust bends the great fir tops,
The cedar moans, the hemlock grieves,
A maple shakes down cold, clear drops
And drowns the fire of fallen leaves.

The Wreck of the Ferndale.



Hoarse with calling, pale with anger,
From dim dawn till set of sun
Wind-blown billows crowding landward
Shook the shores of Washington.

Stalwart seas tramped down the beaches,
Giant seas each thunder-toned
Lunged against the rugged headlands,
While the mighty caverns groaned.

Roared along the sandy reaches,
Foaming, panting in the race,
Struck the cliff's opposing ledges,
Leaped to smite its massive face.

Leaped and flung their white arms wildly,
Then all baffled backward fled,
Moaning, sobbing on the shingle
Like a mother o'er her dead.

Night fell black upon the waters,
Night with no star throbbing through;
Fiercer yet the waters battled,
Stronger still the cold wind blew.

Every pine upon the hilltop
Cried in anguish, cried in vain,
And the ranchman's wife peered seaward
With her face against the pane.

Heard the waves' loud cannonading,
Saw at times a lifting light—
Fiery soul of sky-tossed breaker
Burning through the raven night.

Listened sadly at the window
Thinking of the ships at sea,
Of wrecked sailors drifting helpless,
And the Storm-king's fiendish glee.

Hark! What sound above the breakers—
Was it but the sudden shock
Of a seething sea bombarding
Towering battlements of rock?

Was it but the crashing thunder
Of a fir tree's rugged form,
Of a fir tree that had fallen
As it wrestled with the storm?

No, ah, no! Again the gun spoke
And the ranchman's wife grew pale;
"God have mercy on a vessel
Driven shoreward by the gale!"

"God above have mercy on them!
He alone can still the waves!"
"Hear them calling!" "They will perish!"
"How the ocean roars and raves!"

Thus spake trembling, care-worn women,
Sturdy ranchmen, young and old,
As they gathered on the North Beach
In the darkness and the cold.

All the night their lanterns glimmered
In the wild wind's icy breath,
While the surf grew thick with cordage,
And the breakers talked of death.

All the night they watched and waited
Where the hoary foam-flakes flew;
One by one along the North Beach
Drifted in the Ferndale's crew.

One by one they drifted lifeless
To the bleak Pacific sands,
Salt tears on their pallid faces,
Sea-weeds in their hardened hands.

Eyes of pity looked upon them,
Looked upon them where they lay
As the morn came softly stealing—
Saddened morn in robe of gray.

Autumn Song.



Flowers have flown from hill and hollow,
And the world is saddened now;
Chill winds lead and dead leaves follow,
Empty nest and barren bough.

Rusted grass the gusts entangle,
Loudly pipe the orchard trees;
All the day the white gulls wrangle
In the spray of sullen seas.

All the day the waves are breaking
On the shore with sob and sigh;
Birds their southward flight are taking
Underneath a leaden sky.

Gone the summer's golden weather,
Gone the shaded woodland ways;
Song and blossom die together,
In the drear November days.

The Woods of the West.



Oh, woods of the west, leafy woods that I love,
Where through the long days I have heard
The prayer of the wind in the branches above
And the tremulous song of the bird,
Where the clustering blooms of the dog-wood
hang o'er—

White stars in the dusk of the pine,
And down the dim aisles of the old forest pour
The sunbeams that melt into wine!

Oh, woods of the west, how oft to your shade
Have I come in the hot August hours,
And trod the green mantle lone Solitude laid
Through the deeps of your night-haunted bowers,
And lingering beside the pure, crystalline streams—
Those poets that rhyme as they run,
And watched in the shallows the silvery gleams
Of the minnows in meshes of sun!

Oh, woods of the west, I am sighing to-day
For the sea-songs your voices repeat,
For the evergreen glades, for the glades far away
From the stifling air of the street,
And I long, ah, I long to be with you again
And to dream in that region of rest,
Forever apart from this warring of men—
Oh, wonderful woods of the west!

The Dawn of Christmas Day.



The winds are dead, and ah, how still!
The stars are large; a silver blade
Yon homeward sailing moon has made
Upon the somber, wooded hill.

The towering fir trees breathe a prayer,
And lo, each white star hides away
Behind a fallen robe of gray,
And bird notes thrill the morning air!

An overflowing cup of wine
Is slowly lifting in the east;
Awake, oh, man, to Beauty's feast,
The glory of the sky is thine!

And now from peaks that flash and gleam
The golden light of dawn is hurled
Across the rugged, western world,
And drenches hill and vale and stream.

Oh, hallowed day when Christ was born
Bring sweetest peace to everyone;
From land of snow to land of sun
Let love prevail on Christmas morn!

Long Ago.



Oh, that I again could be
Down there by that peaceful sea,
Down there where I used to go
In the summers long ago!
You are gone, my boyhood's mate,
You who met me at the gate
Nevermore will say, "Come, Joe,
Follow me and I will show
Sweetest roses, fresh and gay,
Purple pansies, new-mown hay,
Lovely apples, blushing red,
Big pears, larger than your head!"
Nevermore will we go through
Fields of clover, where the dew
Fell like tiny globes of light
From the blooms of pink and white;

Nevermore at golden noon
Listen to the robin's tune
Thrill the very heart of June.
Ah, how happy were we two,
What a merry maiden you,
Romping under azure skies
With flushed cheeks and laughing eyes,
And I thought your blowing hair
Had, within its silken snare,
Caught the fringes of the pall
That the night throws over all!
I remember how you ran
With a "beat me if you can!"
Out to where the ebbing tide
Left the beach so cool and wide;
How we gathered brown seaweeds,
Pearly shells and floating reeds,
And with chubby little hand
Wrote my name upon the sand;
How we watched o'er waters blue
Distant sails fade from our view
While you cried in glee, "I know
They are melting flakes of snow!"

Then, when joyous day was done,
And the slowly sinking sun
Lifted broad, bright bars of gold
From beneath the maples old,
And the pale stars faintly gleamed—
Silver dots to us they seemed—
You would sometimes almost cry
As I said, "Well, Floss, good-by."
You are dead and I am gray,
Coldly pipes the wind to-day
As I sit and wonder still
If the orchard on the hill
Looks the same, and if the lawn
Is the one we played upon,
And if on your distant grave
Flowers grow and grasses wave,
And the robin chirps to you
Just the way he used to do.

Morning.



Asleep lie the waves on the black, winding beaches,
The peaks to the west are dim shadows afar,
A gull drifts high over; the dreamy dawn reaches
A wan, holy hand to the pale morning star.

The deep woodland thrills to the song of the thrushes;
Now comes the fair Morn with a rose on her breast,
While the great Sea awakens and trembles and blushes,
Then dons a gold garment to welcome his guest.

The Derelict.



I am rolled and swung, I am rocked and flung,
I am hammered and heaved and hurled,
I am tossed and wheeled, I am blown and reeled,
And battered about the world.

On the pushing tide I ride and ride,
Or loiter and loaf at ease,
With never a care, though foul or fair,
I follow the foamy seas.

Men come not nigh when they pass me by,
For they fear me, everyone,
As I cleave the gray of the dawning day,
Or drowse in the summer sun.

Past unknown isles, for miles and miles,
I wander away to where
The iceberg lifts and the salt spray drifts
In the freezing arctic air.

I steal by the bars when the flame-winged stars
Have swarmed in the upper blue,
And the glow and shine of the drenching brine
Like white fire burns me through.

I haunt as a ghost the rock-girt coast
Where the bell-buoy loudly rings,
And the breakers leap to the mighty sweep
Of the night wind's sable wings.

I shake and moan, I creak and groan,
In the wrathful tempest when
The old Sea raves and digs deep graves
For the jolly sailor men.

What matters time or what the clime
To a vagrant of the sea?
To live or die, oh, naught care I,
There is no port for me!

Love and I.



She was my own, was all my own,
I loved her in an unknown land,
She rained warm kisses on my brow,
And o'er the shining, dimpled sand
We went together, hand in hand,
And watched the pale waves rise and bow.

All nature seemed to worship her;
The sea's great heart would beat and beat
If she but danced along the shore;
The strolling sun laid at her feet
His rich red robe, and loud and sweet
The birds sang to her evermore.

I thought her love for me was true,
She was so good, she was so fair;
I drank her beauty day by day;
A gleam of snow—a bosom bare
Shone through her tangled, twilight hair;
I loved her more than I can say.

Alas! her brown eyes changed to green,
Each glance was like a piercing dart;
I silent stood; I could but stare,
While freezing fingers clutched my heart;
She raised an arm, "We now must part;
I'm Love," quoth she, "henceforth beware!"

SONNETS.

One Autumn Night.



Can I forget that glorious, autumn night
So full of joyous pain when you and I
Stood on the shore beneath a cloudless sky
And watched the moon, all drenched with holy light,
Sail slowly up and toss a veil of white
Across the heaving sea?—when waves rode by
And pressed broad palms upon the rocks, to try
And bear away the rough stone from our sight?
Ah, no! 'Twas then I spoke to you of love;
My secret which you long ere that had guessed;
'Twas then I first knew passion's fiery heat
And kissed your cheek, your lips, while high above
A great star shook and in its burning breast,
As in my own, a red heart beat and beat.

By the Pacific.



From this quaint cabin window I can see
The strange, vague line of ghostly driftwood, though
No ray of silver moon or soft star glow
Steals through the summer night's solemnity.
Pale forms drive landward and wild figures flee
Like spectres up the shore; I hear the slow,
Firm tread of marching billows which I know
Will walk beside the years that are to be.
Sweet, gentle sleep is banished from mine eyes,
I lie and think of wrecks until the sobs
And groans of drowning sailors lost at sea
Come mingled with the gray gulls' plaintive cries
And those tumultuous, incessant throbs—
The heavy heart-beats of Eternity.

A Picture.



A low-roofed cottage, and beyond a pine,
Whose poet-heart knows naught but melody;
A green lawn sloping to a placid sea
All sunset flushed; a brook that draws a line
Of silver where gold poppy petals shine
Amid pink clover blooms; a maple tree—
A cloud of green that hovers silently
Above a sweet-breathed honeysuckle vine
Along an ambling fence; a little gate,
And she in maiden beauty standing there,
The pure, young face half ringed with raven
night;
The soft, pink cheeks and burning lips that wait
My coming, and the dusky eyes turned where
A gray road wavers through the waning light.

The Cyclone.



The child of Horror and wild Wrath am I,
A creature that loves ruin and despair;
My loins are girt with Fury, and I wear
The robe of Night; to seize fair homes, to try
My power upon the haunts of men is my
Delight; the huge veins in my black breast glare
With flame and passion while I onward bear
An hundred souls across the shaking sky.
Ah, when with thunder voice I earthward come
Pale women shrink and shudder; at the sight
Of my dark form the bravest holds his breath;
My awful majesty strikes all things dumb
As on the rough round of the world I write
The terrorizing signature of Death.

Night in Camp.



Fierce burns our fire of driftwood; overhead
Gaunt maples lift long arms against the night;
The stars are sobbing,—sorrow-shaken, white,
And high they hang, or show sad eyes grown red
With weeping for their queen,—the moon, just dead.
Black shadows backward reel when tall and bright
The broad flames stand and fling a golden light
On mats of soft green moss around us spread.
A sudden breeze comes in from off the sea,
The vast, old forest draws a troubled breath,
A leaf awakens; up the shore of sand
The slow tide, silver-lipped, creeps noiselessly;
The campfire dies; then silence deep as death;
The darkness pushing down upon the land.



Morning in Camp.



A bed of ashes and a half-burned brand
Now mark the spot where last night's campfire sprung
And licked the dark with slender, scarlet tongue;
The sea draws back from shores of yellow sand
Nor speaks lest he awakes the sleeping land.
Tall trees grow out of shadows; high among
Their somber boughs one clear, sweet song is sung,
In deep ravine by drooping cedars spanned
All drowned in gloom, a flying pheasant's whirr
Rends morning's solemn hush; gray rabbits run
Across the clovered glade, while far away
Upon the hills each huge, expectant fir
Holds open arms in welcome to the sun—
Great, pulsing heart of bold, advancing day!

Alone Upon the Mountain Side.



Alone upon the mountain side—alone
In Solitude's wide realm, where no
Sound enters save at intervals the low,
Deep roar of avalanche; huge walls of stone
The mighty hand of God has overthrown
As He builds high his pyramid of snow—
His stairway to the stars; alone I go
Across a white, white world that ne'er has known
The taint of earth; and now I see far down
The dreaming pines; I see an eagle sweep
Athwart the blue; a gleaming river bind
In gorgeous braid the valley's golden gown;
A cataract plunge o'er the distant steep
And flutter like a ribbon in the wind.

Dawn on Puget Sound.



The wooded hill against the sky's pale glow
Looms huge and black; the stars fade from my sight—
Those trembling tear-drops of the mourner Night;
The sea is gray; a gull on wings of snow
Drifts noiselessly; all things are hushed as though
In wonder at God's mystery of light;
Above the peaks the sky grows strangely white;
Somewhere a bird from sudden overflow
Of joy bursts into song—a strain so fine
Each leaf is tingling with the melody;
The east has hints of gold; the night is gone;
The dimpled tide is flushed with dreams of wine,
And, lo, in gorgeous splendor smiles the sea
Beneath the pink feet of the new-born Dawn!

Noon on Puget Sound.



The sea is like a sapphire in the glare
Of noon—the pulsing, gleaming sea that lies
Between tall peaks, beneath deep violet skies;
The gulls in silver clouds drift down the air,
And on my brow, pure as a maiden's prayer,
The cool wind lingers; now a gray grouse tries
His muffled drum amid the firs that rise
Above the pebbled shore, and here and there
The salmon flash their sabers in the sun;
A fisher's dingy boat slow drowns through
The opal waters, and far off a white
Sail shimmers in the haze; clear streamlets run
From slopes of emerald and kiss the blue
On beaches that are dazzling lanes of light.

Evening on Puget Sound.



His crimson sword the dying sun lets fall
Across the sea and all the water glows
With sudden splendor—one great flaming rose;
The peaks burst into bloom; each icy wall
Is bathed in fire; each fir, green-robed and tall,
Is now a golden tower; a cool wind blows
From off the chaste Olympics' shadowed snows;
Far, far away a loon's long, quavering call
Sounds faintly in the restful, twilight air;
The sweet dusk deepens and majestic Night—
Mother of dreams and sleep—sinks silently
Upon the land; the tide steals in and where
The ripples dance I watch the red stars write
In fiery lines God's message to the sea.

The Pioneer.



Oh, staunch path-finder! Grizzled pioneer!
Your brown, thick-furrowed face has known the heat
Of sun-scorched plain and felt the stinging sleet
On mountain peaks. Yet ever of good cheer
You toiled, though lean, pale Hunger came so near
You heard the tread of his approaching feet;
Dark-browed Despair you sometimes downward beat
And stood above the prostrate form of Fear.
I count you as a soldier brave and true;
A hero loved of heroes, whose strong hand
Upheld the flag of Progress to the skies;
Who suffered patiently and never knew
Defeat, and who within a wild, weird land
Did strike the blow that bade a new world rise.

To the Sea.



I ne'er can say, oh, ancient, wrinkled Sea!
In what one mood of yours I love you most—
Gray pilgrim slowly plodding down the coast;
At times, I think you are most dear to me
When you have wedded Calm, or when, maybe,
Like some grim conqueror of old you boast
In kingly pride your mighty, maddened host
That jars the world with its white cavalry.
Again, I stand enraptured when in nights
Of storm you are awakened from your dreams
And let each foaming, untamed charger free,
When fire of crashing cannon weirdly lights
Earth's rock-built battlements—oh, then it seems
That you are even more than Majesty!

If She Should Die.

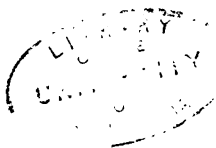


If she should die—the thought of utter gloom
And untold grief through all my years is this.
I shudder, God! What loneliness to miss
Her loving presence from our cosy room
And know within a damp and darkened tomb
There lies the heart I draw in rapturous bliss
Against my own; the tender cheek I kiss
Whereon a crimson flower is now in bloom.
Each bird would follow in her spirit's flight,
At break of dawn the rose shed tears of woe
Its trembling lips held upward to the sky,
A star in heaven shine with such a light
'Twould be a marvel to the world below,—
If she should die—if my loved one should die.

Cuba, 1897.



O God, that I might breathe of Freedom's air!
Alone I weep to-day—alone, forlorn—
Twin sister of pale Sorrow, wan and worn;
Low, low I kneel with dark, disheveled hair;
My noblest, bravest sons lie starving where
Grim Morro looms on high; my flesh is torn
And bleeding from the tyrant's lash; I mourn
My children slain; I cry in my despair
For some protecting arm, some flashing sword
Upraised in my defense; I cry, and yet
All lands stand dumb and will not answer me;
How long ere my deep prayer be heard, O Lord?
How long ere my bruised feet be firmly set
Upon the radiant peak of Liberty?



Since She is Gone.



Since she is gone the moments pass me by
So slow—so slow it often seems to me
Gray Time has grown so very old that he
Moves like a palsied man about to die.
Through all the black hours of the night I lie
With empty arms and hearken to the sea
Along the barren shore moan wearily,
And hear the homeless wind make sad reply.
Once more upon my brow I long to feel
The fire of her red lips that thrilled me through;
To see her warm, white bosom fall and rise
And all the passion of her soul reveal,
And look, O God, and look again into
The deep blue heaven of her lustrous eyes!

The Silent Woods.



The lone abode of Twilight and Repose
Is this deep forest of my western land;
In the eternal hush the slim ferns stand;
Above, the cedar and the hemlock doze
In velvet robes of green the dank moss throws
From massive bough to bough; on either hand
Time's drapery shrouds all and weirdly grand
Are these dim aisles the sunshine never knows.
The frail, white lilies glimmer in the gloom
Like feeble stars within the thicket's night,
Or slender tapers which the wood-nymphs keep
Faint-burning in each close, dusk-haunted room
That their wan glow, perchance, may serve to light
The feet of Silence through the halls of Sleep.

The Fall of the Fir.



A sudden shudder of each limb; a cry
Of agony, and downward to his fate
The giant rushes with the hiss of Hate;
A lone, white star is shaken from the high
Dark boughs that sweep across the twilight sky;
With bated breath the stalwart woodsmen wait;
And now a mighty roar as when a great,
Foam-crested sea, heart-broken, comes to die
Upon the crags, or when the Storm-king swings
His lash of flame; an avalanche of sound
That stirs the ancient solitude until
The whole earth trembles and mute Silence flings
Her shattered form upon the shaking ground,
And frightened Echo flees from hill to hill.

The Fishermen: Puget Sound.



To-day my inland, fir-enshadowed sea
In such untroubled slumber lies below
The fire-filled dome of azure that her slow,
Soft breathing scarce breaks the tranquillity
Of her broad, burnished breast. There comes to me
From where the beach gleams like a drift of snow
High flung against a wall of green, the low
Caressing tongue of far-off Italy,
And through dark boughs I see strong fishermen,
Black-browed and swarthy, toiling with all might
At dripping net; I see the flash of oar,
That silvered mass imprisoned there,
And then a sudden flood of vivid, burning light
Poured out upon the slanting, sandy shore.

June.



The peerless skies of June bend over me,
And, ah, what happiness the queen month brings!
The balmy air is full of whirring wings;
The clover blooms are white on hill and lea,
And to the nodding rose the bumble-bee
Repeats his confidential mumblings,
While in the dusky dell the wood-thrush sings
A song so sweet 'twould gladden Ecstasy;
And, oh, the joy I feel to lie, care-free,
Beneath broad maples that the robins love,
Within the sound of rhyming, silver streams,
And watch the butterfly lilt drowsily
From flower to flower, and faintly hear, above,
The lisp of leaves like echoes heard in dreams!

Haunted.



Along its edge stand tall, rust-colored weeds
Through which green snakes and slimy lizards glide;
Amid the tufts of grass black beetles hide,
And frogs blow bugles in the rustling reeds.
From tangled sedge the timid wild fowl leads
Her little brood, and quietly they ride
Among the murky pools, while down beside
A rotting log the watchful heron feeds.
When flying clouds obscure a bent, old moon
Strange sounds are heard—a low, distressing cry;
A sob; a moan; the rushes shake with fright;
A sudden deathly silence falls, and soon
A ghostly maiden figure hurries by,
Whose wild eyes glow with weird, unearthly light.

On the Marsh.



Beneath a dark and brooding winter's sky
The somber, melancholy marsh to-day
Lies desolate, wind-ridden, drear and gray;
Amid the rusty reeds the sea-birds cry;
The tawny, swirling river loiters by
Dwarf willows and in silence winds away
Across bleak levels to the foamy bay;
Above, with whistling wings the swift teal fly
To murky pools among the woven grass;
The geese call from the clouds; a veil of rain
Now dims the distance, and the chill gusts make
Shrill pipings in the rushes as they pass,
And moan along the waste as if in pain,
Or hiss through tangled tules like a snake.

QUATRAINS.

Mount Rainier.



Long hours we toiled up through the solemn wood
Beneath moss-banners stretched from tree to tree;
At last upon a barren hill we stood
And, lo, above loomed Majesty!

Custer.



When dashing, gallant Custer fell he gave
The world a shining name Time cannot dim;
He was a soldier so intensely brave
That even Courage paled to follow him.

Moonrise.

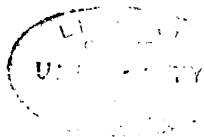


A beaming, patient, peaceful face
The moon now lifts above the sea;
Across the waves with maiden grace
Her white, jeweled arm falls languidly.

A Sea Picture.



A level sand beach stretching far away,
And flecked with shells like fallen flakes of snow,
And in the distance, near the dying day,
Two figures etched against the afterglow.



Creeds.



These paths are narrow and on either side
Loom Superstition's ancient peaks—forsooth
So high their summits they forever hide
From groping travelers the light of Truth!

The West Shore.



Green leagues of wood and red rose bowers
With yellow sunshine sifting through;
Tall billows flinging white foam-flowers
To kingly peaks in skies of blue.

Bashford, Herbert

1901

MT. RAINIER

Same, in his *Wolves of the Sea and
other poems.* 1901 p. 45

sun burns,
ward look
urns
ondrous book.

x

Butterflies.



Fast dancing flames on twig and bough,
Bright flakes of sunshine drifting through
The heavy woodland shadows; now
Wee, wavering stars against the blue.

The Thrush.



Within the thicket's deepest night
He trills so sweetly unto me
The crystal rain of his delight
Would captivate fair Melody.

Along Shore.



**What wondrous sermons these seas preach to men!
What lofty pinnacles they seek to climb!
How old and bent they are, yet strong as when
They rocked the infant Time!**

A Western Forest.



Dark boughs weighed down with silence; in a dim,
Cool nook a gray doe and her spotted fawn;
Above, upon a fir tree's massive limb,
A crouching cougar with keen daggers drawn.

At a Child's Grave.



It is not dew that gleams so bright
On these frail flowers 'neath which she sleeps,
But tears shed by the mourner Night,
Who ever lingers here and weeps.

The Birth of the Red Rose.



In the dawn of the world, in God's first morning sun
Two white-petaled roses bloomed out in the South,
And her hot, crimson lips Passion pressed upon one
And its heart turned to flame at the fire of her mouth.

In the Garden.



The fragrant, red roses bend quivering stems,
The firefly strikes flame on the tall lily's tongue,
The sweet clover blossoms wear glittering gems—
Rare jewels in the veil that the white moon has flung.

October.

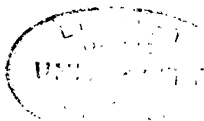


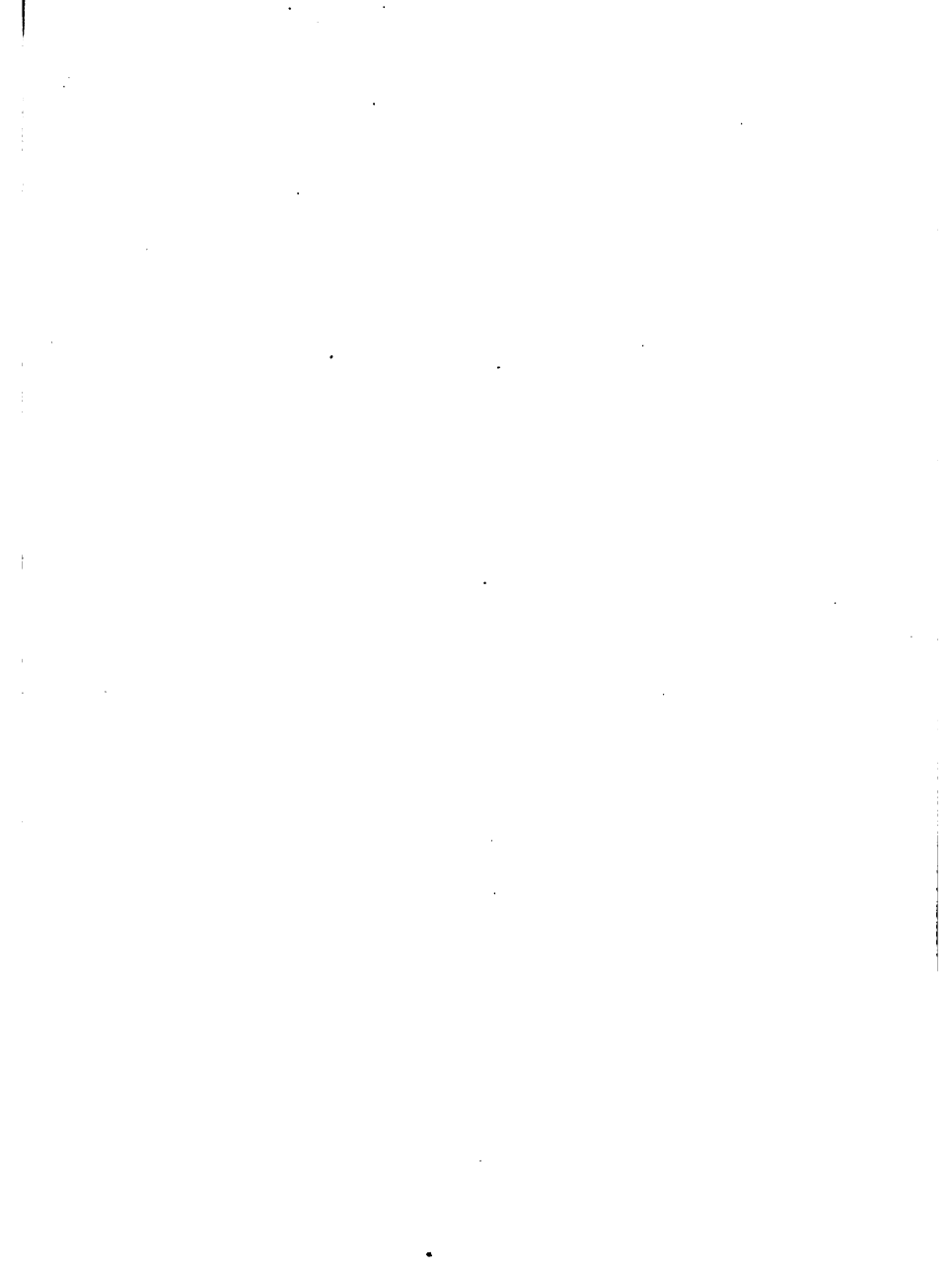
October is a maiden fair
With dreamy eyes and drooping head,
And through her wealth of misty hair
Her cheeks are always blushing red.

Sunset.



Like some huge bird that sinks to rest
The sun goes down—a weary thing—
And o'er the water's placid breast
It lays a scarlet, outstretched wing.





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